

Death Clue #1

Poe had a pre-existing condition, possibly a brain tumor. His heartbeat was irregular, and he could not consume alcohol without “producing insanity.”

I made my diagnosis and went to Dr. Mott with it. I told him that at best when he was well Mr. Poe's heart beat only ten regular beats after which it suspended or intermitted (as Doctors say). I decided that in his best health, he had leasions [sic] and as he could not bear stimulants or tonics, without producing insanity, I did not feel much hope, that he could be raised up from a brain fever, brought on by extreme suffering of mind and body . . . sedatives even had to be administered with caution.

--Marie Louise Shew (Poe's friend and nurse), Letter to John Henry Ingram (Poe's biographer), January 23, 1875